OF STATE ON THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) and (b) A research project on "Micropropagation of disease free mandarine orange budng by shoot tip grafting technique" was sanctioned by the Department of Biotechnology in March, 1992 at Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalya, Kalyani and was completed in March, 1996. The main objective was Micropropagation and mass produciton of disease free budded seedings of mandarine and field testing of the micropropagated plansts after screening of disease free plansts. The project has been monitored regularly through presentation before the expert committee and task force and progress reports.

A protocol has been developed for producing disease free plants of Darjeeling Orange by shoot tip grafting on different root stocks (sour-orange, rough lime, Rangpur lime). This is a unique technology and provides scope to produce disease free mother groove to supply disease free bud stocks to the citrus growers. A mocropropagated plant takes two years to fruit, while a budded grafted plant takes four years. 30 double grafted plansts were successfully produced which are now in the fruiting stage. Adequate supply of root stock is another limiting factor for citrus cultivation. A protocol has been developed for producing tissue culture raised plants of *Citrus* sp. and successful hardening for field plantation.

(c) and (d) Studies on micropropagation and micro-grafting of Khasi Mandarine orange have also been supported at ICAR Research Complex, Barapani, Shillong. Studies on Nagpur Mandarine are also being conducted at National Research Centre for Citrus, Nagpur under ICAR support. protocol standardisation is in progress for double grafting and hardening in greenhouse. The Department has now supported demonstration trails for field testing of the Darjeeling Orange plants.

Reaction to Technological Breakthrough by NASA

587. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be please to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that NASA (USA) has developed a Technology in aeronautics and built and aeroplane PATH FINDER using Solar Energy for its flight;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) if not, whether Government will call for the requisite information from NASA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MEMBER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Indian scientists are closely keeping track of the results of the scientific investigations being carried out by the Mars Mission on the technology elements and physical/chemical properties of the Martain surface/atmosphere.

(c) The results of the investigations being carried out through this Mission are regularly announced and published by NASA.

इस्पात विकास निधि से ऋण

588. **श्री अनन्तराय देवशंकर दवे:** क्या इस्पात मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या गत कुछ वर्षों के दौरान इस्पात का उत्पादन करने वाले प्रमुख औद्योगिक घरानों को इस्पात निधि से ऋण उपलब्ध कराए गए थे;

(ख) यदि हां, तो अक्तूबर, 1996 के अन्त तक बकाया ऋणों का ब्यौरा क्या है;

(ग) क्या सरकार ने ऋण की अदायगी हेतु कोई समय-सीमा निर्धारित की है;

(घ) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और